



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Austin, TX

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Austin (population 465,622) for a Brownfields Pilot. This Pilot grant assisted the Austin Brownfields Program (ABP) in launching the Austin Brownfields Initiative. Much of Austin's industrial operations have historically been concentrated in the eastern part of the city. In 1992, the city conducted a study to identify old landfills in and around Austin and to determine if any public health and safety issues were associated with them. Of 26 old landfills and dump sites inspected, 20 were located in east Austin. New service-oriented and high-tech businesses are being developed in the rapidly expanding northern and southern portions of Austin. Many of the properties in east Austin are passed over in this era of expansion and development due in part to perceived or real contamination at these properties resulting from past industrial practices. As a result, east Austin has disproportionately greater unemployment and fewer new job opportunities than the rest of the city. Brownfields cleanup and redevelopment is an essential component of the city's Sustainable Community Initiative. The initiative represents Austin's commitment to fostering economic, social, and environmental practices that create a sustainable community.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Austin, Texas

Date of Award: September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three former landfills in east Austin—Brinkley-Anderson, Grove, and Turner.

Contacts:

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(512) 499-1954

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(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

The Pilot will target three landfills in east Austin—Brinkley-Anderson, Grove, and Turner. The communities surrounding these targeted areas are experiencing poverty rates which range from 18 to 30 percent and an unemployment rate that is 3 percent higher than the city as a whole. The minority population in these areas is approximately 72 percent.

OBJECTIVES

The ABP has five objectives: (1) to enhance citizen awareness of brownfields and other environmental issues; (2) to facilitate and encourage citizens to take a more active role in efforts that impact the environmental well-being of their communities; (3) to strengthen lines of communication and working relations between citizens and the city; (4) to create a cooperative approach to addressing brownfields redevelopment and other environmental concerns; and (5) to accelerate the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of brownfields.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Completed Phase I assessments at the Grove, Brinkley-Anderson, and Turner sites;
- Produced and distributed the quarterly ABP newsletter entitled "Brownfields Broadcast" to residents living in neighborhoods surrounding the targeted brownfields;
- Hosted and participated in at least eight public forums and neighborhood meetings to provide information about future redevelopment activities at the targeted sites;
- Developed an ABP web site to serve as an information resource about Pilot activities; and
- Completed a Phase II environmental site assessment on the Turner site.

The Pilot is:

- Developing a communication network within the community to help foster a long-term plan for brownfields redevelopment in the city;
- Working with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to leverage financial support for site assessment and to develop brownfields action plans for site cleanup and reuse; and
- Working with the city's Planning Department to identify and link smart growth potential to the ABP.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Austin Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- The City of Austin was awarded an additional \$500,000 grant under EPA's Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilot program in September 1999.